

**Melvin Butte Vegetation Management Project**

**Inventoried Roadless Areas Report**

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**January 1, 2016**

## **Inventoried Roadless Areas**

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This environmental assessment incorporates by reference (as per 40 CFR 1502.21) the Inventoried Roadless Areas specialists report and other technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusions of this environmental assessment. The entire report is in the project record which is located at the Sisters Ranger District office, Sisters, Oregon.

### **Effects of the Action Alternatives on Inventoried Roadless Areas**

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*Issue:* The action alternatives have the potential to affect Inventoried Roadless Areas by harvesting trees and conducting post-harvest activities in the project area.

*Measure:* Measures used to address this issue include acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas located within the project area, the distance from harvest units to Inventoried Roadless Areas, and activities associated with the harvesting of trees.

### **Affected Environment**

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) are areas identified in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule in a set of inventoried roadless area maps, contained in the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2, dated November 2000, which are held at the National headquarters office of the Forest Service, or any subsequent update or revision of those maps (36 CFR 294.1). These areas were set aside through administrative rulemaking and have provisions, within the context of multiple use management, for the protection of inventoried roadless areas. Most IRA boundaries are substantially identical to those identified as "Roadless Areas", referred to in the 1982 planning rule (36 CFR 219.17) and identified by the Forest Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Appendix C; however, some localized, minor differences in the boundaries may exist.

The following list outlines roadless area characteristics as defined by the January 12, 2001 Roadless Rule

Resources or features that are often present in and characterize inventoried roadless areas, including:

- (1) High quality or undisturbed soil, water, and air;
- (2) Sources of public drinking water;
- (3) Diversity of plant and animal communities;

- (4) Habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species and for those species dependent on large, undisturbed areas of land;
- (5) Primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized and semi-primitive motorized classes of dispersed recreation;
- (6) Reference landscapes;
- (7) Natural appearing landscapes with high scenic quality;
- (8) Traditional cultural properties and sacred sites; and
- (9) Other locally identified unique characteristics.

There are two Inventoried Roadless Areas in the general vicinity of the project area. The acres associated with these Inventoried Roadless Areas are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Inventoried Roadless Areas in the General Vicinity of the Melvin Butte Vegetation Management Project

<b>Name of IRA</b>	<b>Total Size</b>
Bearwallows	7,316 acres
Three Sisters	2,690 acres
<b>Total</b>	10,006 acres

## **Actions and Effects Common to All Action Alternatives**

### **Timber Harvest and Associated Activities**

The action alternatives would harvest trees of all species to meet forest restoration goals as well as to realize their economic value. The planning area is about 5,375 acres. Alternative 2 would treat about 4,469 acres and harvest about 6.6 million board feet of timber. Alternative 3 would treat about 4,405 acres and harvest about 6.3 million board feet of timber. In addition, each action alternative would close about 6 miles of Forest System roads and decommission about 8 miles of Forest System roads. Alternative 2 would construct about 0.80 miles of temporary road; no temporary road would be constructed in Alternative 3.

Figure 1 that shows the relationship of the action alternatives to the Inventoried Roadless Areas in the general vicinity of the project area.

### **Alternative 1 – No Action**

There would be no management actions under the No Action alternative. Biological and ecosystem functions would continue

### **Alternatives 2 (Proposed Action) and Alternative 3**

## ***Direct and Indirect Effects***

There would be no direct effects to the Three Sisters or Bearwallows Inventoried Roadless Areas; no trees would be harvested in any Inventoried Roadless Area as a result of the action alternatives. There would be no direct effects to the roadless characteristics such as soil, water, sources of drinking water, habitat for Threatened and Endangered and candidate species, dispersed recreation, cultural properties, unique characteristics, and plant and animal community diversity.

Five timber harvest units (units 12, 51, 53, 54, and 57) are contiguous with the Bearwallow Inventoried Roadless in Alternative 2; three timber harvest units (units 12, 53, and 57) are contiguous with the Bearwallow Inventoried Roadless Area in Alternative 3. The location of these harvest units in the forest in any of the action alternatives would be determined using a GPS device to ensure the integrity of the Bearwallow Inventoried Roadless Area.

No timber harvest units are contiguous with the Three Sisters Inventoried Roadless Area. Three timber harvest units (units 31, 40, and 48), however, are in close proximity to the Three Sisters Roadless Area. Table 2 shows their distance in feet from the IRA.

Table 2: Harvest Units in Proximity to the Three Sisters Inventoried Roadless Area

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Distance to the Three Sisters IRA</b>
31	1,092 feet
40	397 feet
48	666 feet

There may be indirect effects to the Three Sisters and Bearwallow Inventoried Roadless Area as a result of the action alternatives. Timber harvest activities may generate dust and noise that are usually associated with ground-based logging systems. This effect would be limited to the duration of a timber sale; likely 1 year at the most. Those recreating in an Inventoried Roadless Area would potentially hear noise associated with heavy equipment. Dust may also be seen by recreationists in an Inventoried Roadless Area as a result of a timber sale.

Wildlife species such as mule deer and black-backed woodpecker, both of which represent a broad range of Management Indicator Species (MIS), may be affected by disturbance. These species may disperse from the area while operations are being conducted, likely returning after operations have ceased as habitat in the Inventoried Roadless Area would not be affected by timber harvest operations.

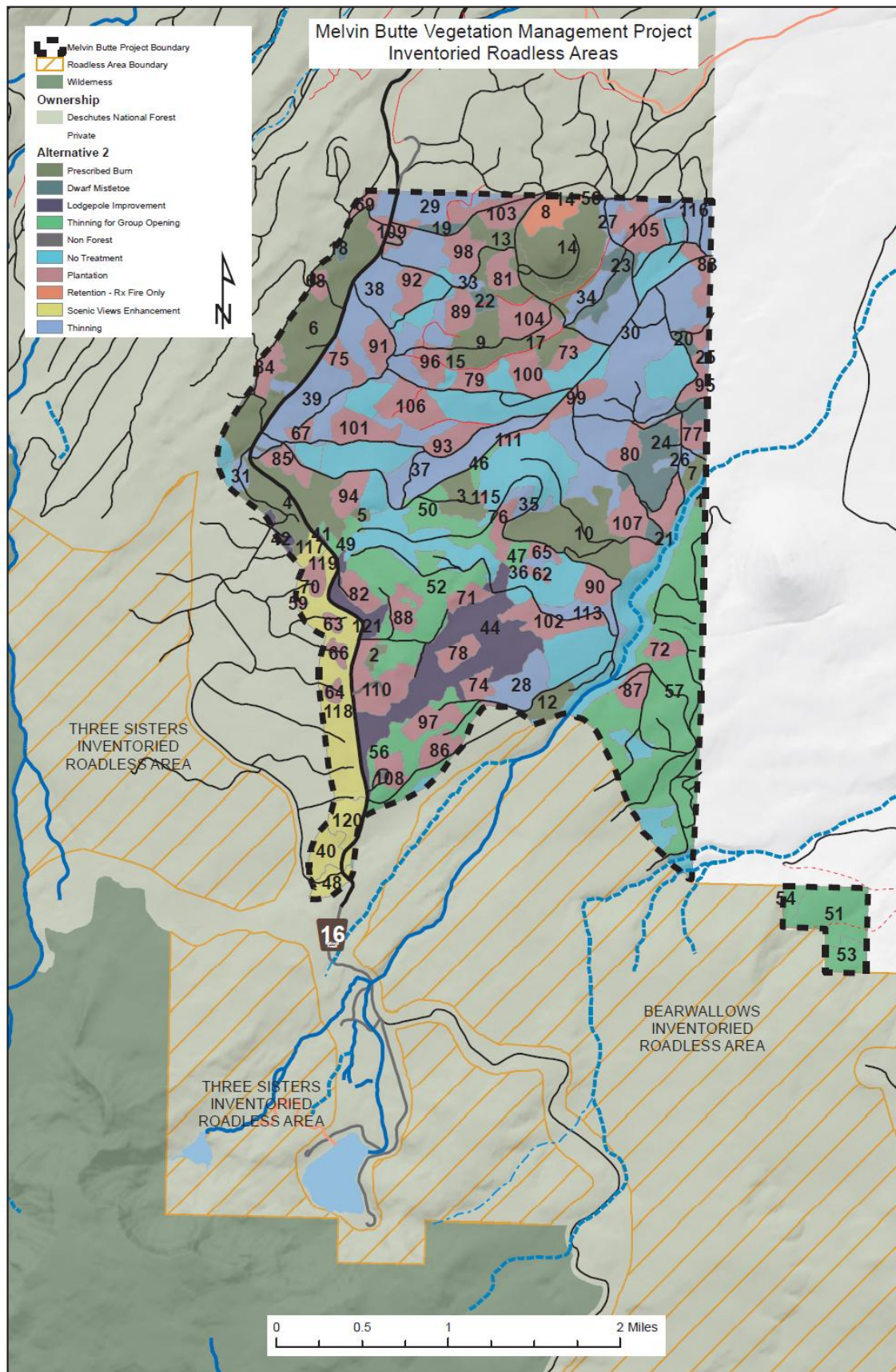
Table 3 shows the number of acres of Inventoried Roadless Area impacted by the project.

Table 3: Inventoried Roadless Areas that Overlap Alternative 2 and Alternative 3

	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 3</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Timber Harvest in an	0	0	0

Inventoried Roadless Area			
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Figure 1: The relationship of the Inventoried Roadless Areas to the Action Alternatives.



## ***Cumulative Effects***

The cumulative effects area is the Melvin Butte Vegetation Management project area and the time frame is the next 5 years.

There are no planned future foreseeable actions that would take place in the Three Sisters and Bearwallows Inventoried Roadless Areas. These areas would maintain their roadless and ecological characteristics. Any necessary timber cutting or any road construction or road reconstruction in emergency situations involving wildfire suppression, search and rescue, or other threats to public health and safety in inventoried roadless areas would require review by the Regional Forester.

There may be indirect effects to the Inventoried Roadless Areas as a result of the action alternatives because of the dust and noise that are usually associated with ground-based logging systems. These indirect effects would be limited in duration and intensity and would not affect the integrity of Inventoried Roadless Areas located outside the project area boundary.

## **Conclusion**

The action alternatives may have indirect effects to Inventoried Roadless Areas as a result of the Melvin Butte Vegetation Management Project.